

WELLNESS POLICY



CHAPTER 12

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WELLNESS POLICY

This chapter discusses the requirements of Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. Section 204 of this law requires sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a local Wellness Policy that addresses student wellness and the growing problem of childhood obesity by the beginning of School Year 2006-2007.

The legislation also places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level, so that the individual needs of each district can be addressed. The most effective policies are those tailored to the specific needs of a local school or district.

Required Components

As required by law, a local wellness policy, at a minimum, shall include:

- Goals for **nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based wellness activities**;
- **Nutrition guidelines** for all foods available on each school campus under the local educational agency (LEA) during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;
- A plan for **measuring implementation** of the local wellness policy, including designation of 1 or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that each school fulfills the district's local wellness policy;
- Assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall **not be less restrictive than regulation issued by the USDA**.

Required Involvement

As required by law, at a minimum, the LEA shall involve the following in the development of the school wellness policy:

- Parents
- Students
- Representatives of the LEA
- School Board
- School Administrators
- Members of the public

For more information and to see sample Wellness Policies visit <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/child/wellness/index.html> .

Questions and Answers

(1) What is a school Wellness Policy?

A school Wellness Policy is a written document , which outlines the rationale, goals and standards, that a school or district plans to implement for the wellness of its students and staff.

(2) How detailed does the policy need to be?

Some are filled with specifics, including nutrient standards, while others provide an overall vision with general guidance and more room for interpretation.

(3) What is a Healthy School Nutrition Environment (HSNE)?

A commitment to nutrition and physical activity, quality school meals, other healthy food options, pleasant eating experiences, nutrition education, and marketing.

(4) Why is a healthy school nutrition environment so important?

Studies show that:

- Nutrition is related to physical well-being, growth and development, readiness to learn, and risk of disease;
- Healthy eating habits early in life contribute to a healthier adult life; and
- Regular physical activity promotes psychological well-being and long term health benefits

(5) What is the State Agency's role in the Wellness Policies?

The State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs is responsible to provide technical assistance, applicable examples, and resources to help districts develop their own individual Wellness Policy.

(6) What is a plan for measuring implementation of the Wellness Policy?

Measuring implementation is best attained if the evaluation tool is incorporated in the wellness policy.

Questions to ask:

- Was the policy effective?
- What results occurred due to policy implementation?
- Were positive effects sustained over time?
- What policy objectives were met?
- What policy objectives can be measured?
- Can any policy objective be tracked?
 - How?
 - Quantitatively?
 - Qualitatively?
- How can the policy be improved?